modification of international terminal building, reconstruction of taxi track, reconstruction of bays number 1 and 2 and strengthening of bays number 10,13,15 and 17.

Improvement of Rajahmundry Airport

4047. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1369 given in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd December, 2002 and state:

(a) whether other nearby airports like Rajahmundry will also be improved; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) The runway has been strengthened and new apron and taxiway have been constructed in April, 2002 at Rajahmundry airport for operation of ATR-72 type of aircraft.

Acceptance of Cash Deposits from Credit Card Holders

4048. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO :

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO :

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the State Bank of India does not accept cash deposits from the credit card holders as is being done by other banks in the metropolitan cities and insists on payments by cheques;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not providing credit card holders the facility of making cash payments for deposits;

(c) whether Government propose to introduce such a facility in the State Bank of India to credit card holders; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) State Bank of India (SBI) has reported that the credit cards are issued by SBI Cards and Payment Services Private Limited (SBICPSL), registered NBFC, a Joint Venture with GE USA and is a separate entity. They have not made

arrangements for acceptance of cash against credit card dues for the following reasons:

(i) Delay involved in remitting the amount received by the branches to Gurgaon.

(ii) Reluctance of the cardholders to pay the Bank charges to remit the money to Gurgaon.

(iii) Ensure that the dues are remitted by the cardholders only.

SBICPSL have installed cheque collection boxes at major branches of SBI at all the 41 centres, where the Credit cards are issued and the cardholders can deposit cheques drawn on any bank participating in clearing in any of the 41 centres. The cardholders are given credit from the date of receipt of the cheque for full value of the cheque without any charges even though cheques are realised later. The cardholder is spared the work of drawing cash from his account and deposit in the cash counter of the bank.

(c) and (d) As the existing facility is more beneficial and convenient to card holders, the need for introducing the facility of accepting cash deposits for credit card dues at branches of SBI is not felt.

Representation of Indian Sugar Mills Association

4049. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Sugar Mills Association and other organizations are demanding for retaining tax on sugar, excise duty, central cess on sugar and excise duty on molasses for a short period of one year in the light of the pathetic condition in which the sugar industry is passing;

(b) if so, the details of the representation made by ISMA; and

(c) the action taken by Government on their request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) had submitted a memorandum to the Government. The memorandum, *inter alia,* requested that keeping in view the health of the sugar industry, sugar mills may be allowed to retain, for a period of two years, the excise duties on sugar and molasses as well as central cess.

(c) The request of the Association was examined and it had not been found feasible to accede to the same.